

The next applicant was a benevolent young lady, who was very zealous as a teacher in the ragged schools, and whom Mabel had seen before, as she often came to Mrs. Burnish for tracts. On this occasion she stated that a lady had sent a destitute child, of eight years old, to the ragged school. His mother was dead, and his father, a drunken cabinman, had run away from him. The boy had been decently reared, could read and write, but was starving when the lady had found him. She "had paid for his board and lodging for a fortnight, but was unable to do more and hoped the child could be taken to some Asylum or Industrial School."

"Is he a thief?" said Mabel, in a hesitating voice.

"No," replied the lady, "as nice a boy as ever I saw in my life. It is a pity to see him in the ragged school."

"I'm afraid, unless he belonged to the criminal class," said Mabel, "he cannot be admitted into any asylum; a copy of a conviction before a magistrate is necessary."

"Why," said the young lady in amazement, "he would be better off than if he were a thief."

"It is the rule," said Mabel, wishing the lady good morning, and taking shelter, as wiser people often do, behind a precedent.

The rest were applicants for letters to dispensaries, and hospitals, but Mabel was obliged to refuse them all, for so many casualties and accidents had happened of late among the people at the brewery, that all the letters were out.

As Mabel, after her hour's work, went up stairs to report progress to Mrs. Burnish, and thought over the cases as she prepared to state them, a misgiving had sprung up in her mind that had not before troubled her. Let not the reader blame her, for having been quick to see the horrors and enormities of her father's business, and slow to notice the analogy between it and the great brewery. Even what lies on the surface is not always seen—that is, if self-interest or apathy furnishes a pair of preservers for the eyes; but those who see clearly the obvious and glaring evil yet may seldom trace it to its source, even when that source is near. Let it be remote, cover it up from observation, shroud, or adorn, or mask it, and the chances are, that the eyes, even of honesty and intelligence, may be hoodwinked and deceived. Mabel had hitherto thought of what the wealth of the Burnish family enabled them to do for others, rather than of the source of the wealth itself—far more of the religious and benevolent tone of the household, than of any trade, as the basis of its prosperity. Indeed, she had never seen, and only most casually heard about, the brewery; and, therefore, it never once occurred to her to draw parallels and deduce inferences. But she was uncomfortable, she hardly knew why, as she drew out her notes, and prepared to read a little digest of the applications of the morning.

"Oh! never mind telling me all about them," said Mrs. Burnish, "say what you have done."

"Given Lady Burnish's letter for the Queen's Hospital," replied Mabel.

"Oh! I'm sorry for that. I forgot to tell you I had promised that to a poor woman with a drunken husband, that my maid knows something of. I always make a point of helping these drunkards' wives, their lot must be so very hard. Only think what things there are in the newspapers about the brutality of the men; it's shocking, positively shocking! I think, giving the poor creatures a letter, so that they may have peace and quietness at such a time, is a great charity. However, if you have given the letter it cannot be helped. I think I can get Mrs. Felix Burnish, who subscribes to Brownlow Hospital, to give me hers."

Mabel spoke of the application for an admission to the Penitentiary and named the orphan country girl in such terms, that Mrs. Burnish said—"You can go to-morrow and speak to Mrs. Basil, the matron, about it; and I should like you to see the Institution. I ought to have gone this week, and read to the young women; but it tires me so dreadfully, you must do it for me. But here come the darlings from their walk. How well they look! Make haste, Emily and Kate, and get your things taken off—Miss Alerton is waiting—for you must all be diligent." Ah, there's nobody like your indolent people for keeping all around them at work!

### TRUE TO HIS PLEDGE.

Tommy Anderson wanted a situation. There is, of course, nothing remarkable in that fact. Most boys of twelve in the same "state of life" as Tommy, wanted them, and very hard it was to get them sometimes. Boys often talk with great glee about going to work, and seem to think they have only to walk up and down a populous thoroughfare, and they will be certain to find just the "place" they want. But if ever poor Tommy thought this he found out his mistake. He had been out for more than a month, day after day, week after week, and had found nothing to suit him, or rather nobody thought it likely that he would suit them. He had advanced up and down this street, and down and up that street, until he grew weary of his task, and seriously thought of going away to sea. No

doubt he would have done so had it not occurred to him that it would prove, possibly, quite as difficult to find a ship as to find a situation on shore, so he gave it up, and continued his search after the latter.

There is an old proverb which says, "He who seeks, finds," and Tommy proved the truth of it, although he thought the proverb would read better if the words "provided he seek long enough" were tacked on to the end of it. He had gone his accustomed round one afternoon with a very heavy heart, and very dim, swollen eyes, and had just turned round with the intention of going home again, when he saw on the opposite side of the road in the centre of a grocer's window the placard:—"A smart, intelligent boy wanted, must be thoroughly honest, and neat in appearance.—Inquire within."

To cross the road and scan the bill very closely was the work of a very few seconds, and as he read it again and again the thought struck him that he was the very boy that grocer stood in need of. Then he reckoned himself up, as per advertisement.

"Smart!" he said to himself. "That means quick and active, not sleepy and lazy. That's all right. 'Intelligent'! That's quick at learning and being a tidy scholar, I s'pose. Well, I think I can do that. 'Thoroughly honest'! Yes, I know I can be thoroughly honest; and then there's the 'neat in appearance.' Humph! that's the stinger," looking down to his threadbare trousers and his boots down at heels. "Let me see, I won't go in, for a minute; I'll try and tidy myself up a bit." He moved quickly away from the shop-front and dived down a side street. Here he brushed his boots with a piece of newspaper, rubbed himself down with the sleeve of his jacket, combed his hair very carefully with his fingers, and putting on his cap the best side foremost, he returned to the main thoroughfare. He did not, however, rush into the grocer's immediately, but he went up to another shop window and gazed very critically at the reflection of himself which he saw there, and then, after a few nice touches, being apparently satisfied, he entered the establishment where the boy was wanted with a very brisk, business-like step. There was a customer being served, so for a moment he just glanced round the shop. It was small, and well stocked with all kinds of goods in the grocery line, and with some goods which are not strictly in the grocery line. These said goods were in bottles, and were labelled with pretty, attractive labels, and had corks in them very neatly sealed with red sealing-wax. Tommy looked at this portion of the stock with no very loving glance, indeed he appeared rather sorry he had come in, and seemed wavering as to whether he should stay where he was, or beat a hasty retreat. But the customer departing just at this juncture, and the gentleman behind the counter asking him very abruptly what he wanted, decided him, and stepping up to the counter he replied as smartly and intelligently as he could—

"Please, sir, I saw the bill in the window, and as I wanted a place I've come to see if you think I'll do for it, sir. I'll work hard, sir, and do my best, sir, indeed I will."

"Humph! all the boys say that; but there, have you got a mother and father?" asked the grocer, a short and rather pompous old gentleman, as he spread his hands out on the counter in the true shopman style.

"No father, sir; but I've got a mother, sir, whose at home in Baker's Rents, No. 13, sir, top back; and I've been trying ever so long to get some work, so that I could help her a bit."

"Father dead, eh?" asked the little grocer.

"Yes, sir; he died three months ago, and left us without a single penny, and we've had hard work to get a crust sometimes, let alone to pay the rent of our room."

"Well, I suppose you can read and write and add up figures?"

"Oh, yes, sir, I'm a pretty good scholar," said Tommy proudly.

"Of course, you know I want an honest boy. Now, how am I to know that you are honest? Can any one give you a character?"

"Only mother, sir, and Mr. Banks, the Chandler, who I used to take out things for on Saturdays. You might ask him, sir?"

"Humph! hardly satisfactory—still, I fancy I can tell an honest lad when I see him. However, you scarcely seem as neat in appearance as I should like my boy to be. Haven't you got any better clothes?"

"No sir, mother can't afford to let me buy any yet, but I mean to get some as soon as I can earn enough money. I will be as neat and tidy as I can, sir."